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[Photographs of turn-of  
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# Effie Shannon

1867-1954

Number of Source Citations: 19

Biography Index. A cumulative index to biographical material in books and magazines. Volume 3: September, 1952-August, 1955. New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1956. [BioIn 3]

The Cambridge Guide to American Theatre. Second edition. Edited by Don B. Wilmeth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. [CamGAT]

Dictionary of Women Worldwide. 25,000 women through the ages. Three volumes. Edited by Anne Commire. Waterford, CT: Yorkin Publications, 2007. [DcWomW]

Filmarama. Volume I: The Formidable Years, 1893-1919. Compiled by John Stewart. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975. [Film 1]

Filmarama. Volume II: The Flaming Years, 1920-1929. Compiled by John Stewart. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977. [Film 2]

Notable Names in the American Theatre. Clifton, NJ: James T. White & Co., 1976. Earlier edition published as The Biographical Encyclopaedia and Who's Who of the American Theatre. 'Necrology' section begins on page 343. This book often alphabetizes by titles of address, e.g.: Dr., Mrs., and Sir. [NotNAT B]

The Oxford Companion to American Theatre. First edition. By Gerald Bordman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984. [OxCamT 1]

The Oxford Companion to American Theatre. Third edition. By Gerald Bordman and Thomas S. Hischak. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. [OxCamT 3]

Plays, Players, and Playwrights. An illustrated history of the theatre. By Marion Geisinger. Updated by Peggy Marks. New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1975. Use the Index, which begins on page 575, to locate biographies. [PIP&P]

Twenty Years of Silents, 1908-1928. Compiled by John T. Weaver. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1971. 'The Players' section begins on page 27. [TwYS]

Who Was Who in America. A component of Who's Who in American History. Volume 3, 1951-1960. Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, 1966. [WhAm 3]

Who Was Who on Screen. First edition. By Evelyn Mack Truitt. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1974. [WhScrn 1]

Who Was Who on Screen. Second edition. By Evelyn Mack Truitt. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1977. [WhScrn 2]

Who Was Who on Screen. Third edition. By Evelyn Mack Truitt. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1983. [WhScrn 3]

Who Was Who in the Theatre: 1912-1976. A biographical dictionary of actors, actresses, directors, playwrights, and producers of the English-speaking theatre. Compiled from Who's Who in the Theatre, Volumes 1-15 (1912-1972). Four volumes. Detroit: Gale Research, 1978. [WhThe]

Who's Who in Hollywood, 1900-1976. By David Ragan. New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House Publishers, 1976. The 'Late Players (1900- 1974)' section begins on page 539. [WhoHol B]

Who's Who on the Stage. The dramatic reference book and biographical dictionary of the theatre. Containing records of the careers of actors, actresses, managers and playwrights of the American stage. 1906 edition. Edited by Walter Browne and F.A. Austin. New York: Walter Browne & F.A. Austin, 1906. Some entries are not in alphabetic sequence. [WhoStg 1906]

Who's Who on the Stage. The dramatic reference book and biographical dictionary of the theatre. Containing careers of actors, actresses, managers and playwrights of the American stage. 1908 edition. Edited by Walter Browne and E. De Roy Koch. New York: B.W. Dodge & Co., 1908. Some entries are not in alphabetic sequence. [WhoStg 1908]

Woman's Who's Who of America. A biographical dictionary of contemporary women of the United States and Canada, 1914-1915. Edited by John William Leonard. New York: American Commonwealth Co., 1914. [WomWWA]

Source Citation: Biography and Genealogy Master Index. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale. Cengage Learning. 1980- 2010.



# W. H. Crane

1845-1928

Number of Source Citations: 1

Who Was Who in the Theatre: 1912-1976. A biographical dictionary of actors, actresses, directors, playwrights, and producers of the English-speaking theatre. Compiled from Who's Who in the Theatre, Volumes 1-15 (1912-1972). Four volumes. Detroit: Gale Research, 1978. [WhThe]

Source Citation: Biography and Genealogy Master Index. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale, Cengage Learning. 1980- 2010.

## William Henry Crane

1845-1928

Birth: April 30, 1845 in Massachusetts, United States

Death: March 7, 1928

Occupation: Actor

Source: Dictionary of American Biography Base Set. American Council of Learned Societies, 1928-1936.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biographical Essay

Further Readings

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### BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Crane, William Henry (Apr. 30, 1845 - Mar. 7, 1928), actor, was born at Leicester, Mass., the son of a locksmith, Amaziah Brito Crane, and of his wife, Mary Sophia Masters. At the age of seven or eight he took part in his first theatricals in a barn loft. At sixteen he graduated from the Brimmer School in Boston; and during that same year his name appeared for the first time on a theatrical program when when he acted the part of Hatchet in Black-Eyed Susan at Cambridgeport. After leaving school he began working in a furniture store, but was unhappy there and continued rehearsing with amateur companies. At eighteen he joined the Holman Opera and Dramatic Troupe as an "apprentice," receiving no salary at first. He had a fine bass voice, and for several years his forte was thought to be light opera. He sang in the operas of Offenbach, Balfe, Donizetti, and others, though he had also numerous spoken parts in popular plays of the time. He

began with serious or "straight" roles, but, substituting on one occasion for a comedian who was ill, he made such a hit that he continued to play comedy throughout most of his career. He remained with the Holman Company seven years and the Oates Opera Company four years. In 1874 he entered R. M. Hooley's stock company in Chicago, where he played not only in the melodrama and comedy of the period, but in Shakespearian and other classics. In 1877 he made a notable success in a new play, *Evangeline*. That year also marked the beginning of his connection with Stuart Robson. Crane had been engaged to play the lead in a comedy, *Our Boarding House*; then plans were changed, Robson was employed for the leading role, and Crane given one less important. Robson, learning the facts, came to Crane and offered to withdraw, but the latter would not permit it; and thus began a partnership which continued for twelve years and a friendship which endured until death. One of their best-remembered hits together was made as the two Dromios in *A Comedy of Errors*. Crane also scored in such parts as Falstaff, 'Squire Hardcastle, Sir Toby Belch, but the partners met with their greatest success in an American comedy, *The Henrietta*, by Bronson Howard. In 1889 they separated amicably, Crane to take the star part in *The Senator*, in which he frankly imitated, in makeup and "business," Senator Plumb of Kansas. During the remainder of his career he was best known as the exponent of a slightly varying, homely, American type, usually a bit uncouth, sometimes gruff and erotehety, but sound and kindly at heart. Such were his parts in *On Probation*, *The American Minister*, *Brother John*, *Fool of Fortune*, *The Pacific Mail*, and *The Head of the Family*. A notable variation was that of the tight-fisted, heartless screw in *Business is Business* (1906). From 1900 to 1903 he played perhaps his greatest hit, *David Harum*, a dramatization of Edward Noyes Westcott's popular novel. This was followed by *The Spenders* and *Business is Business*. Then came *The Senator Keeps House* and a revival of *She Stoops to Conquer*. George Ade's *Father and the Boys* was successful in the seasons of 1907-10. Crane's last play was *The New Henrietta*, his old comedy rewritten and brought up to date. He retired from the legitimate stage in 1916, though in November of the following year he appeared in vaudeville. The last years of his life were spent in California, where he played in at least two motion pictures. He died at Hollywood, survived by his wife, Ella Chloe Myers of Utica, N.Y., to whom he was married on Nov. 6, 1870.

-- Alvin F. Harlow

#### FURTHER READINGS

[The major source is Crane's autobiography, *Footprints and Echoes* (1927). See also *Who's Who in America*, 1926-27; *Who's Who in the Theatre*, 1922; T. A. Brown, *Hist. of the N.Y. Stage* (3 vols., 1903); obituaries in leading newspapers; especially N.Y. *Evening Post*, Mar. 7, N.Y. *Herald-Tribune*, and Boston *Globe*, Mar. 8, 1928. The obituary in the N.Y. *Times*, Mar. 8, 1928, states that the initial "H" in Crane's name stood for Henry.]

#### SOURCE CITATION

"William Henry Crane." *Dictionary of American Biography Base Set*. American Council of Learned Societies, 1928-1936.

Reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich.:

# Bertha Galland

1876-1932

Number of Source Citations: 4

Dictionary of Women Worldwide. 25,000 women through the ages. Three volumes. Edited by Anne Commire. Waterford, CT: Yorkin Publications, 2007. [DcWomW]

Notable Names in the American Theatre. Clifton, NJ: James T. White & Co., 1976. Earlier edition published as The Biographical Encyclopaedia and Who's Who of the American Theatre. 'Necrology' section begins on page 343. This book often alphabetizes by titles of address, e.g.: Dr., Mrs., and Sir. [NotNAT B]

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Source Citation: Biography and Genealogy Master Index. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale, Cengage Learning. 1980- 2010.



Crane, William H[enry] (1845–1928), actor. A native of Leicester, Massachusetts, he made his debut in 1863 as the Notary in *The Daughter of the Regiment* in Harriet Holman's touring company, with which he remained for eight seasons. He then played low comedian roles with the Alice Oates Light Opera. In 1874 Crane created the role of Le Blanc, another Notary, in the original *Evangeline*. Three years later he was first teamed with Stuart ROBSON [né Henry Robson Stuart] (1836–1903). Robson was born in Annapolis and made his acting debut in Baltimore in 1852. The comic actor performed with Laura Keene's company in New York, with Mrs. Drew at the Arch Street Theatre in Philadelphia, and with William Warren in Boston before his celebrated partnership with Crane that would survive until 1889. Their initial success was as the quarreling neighbors in *Our Boarding House* (1877), followed by *The Comedy of Errors* (1878, revived 1885), *Our Bachelors* (1878), *Sharps and Flats* (1880), *Twelfth Night* (1881), *My Mother-in-Law* (1884), and their biggest success, *The Henrietta* (1887). After the team split, Crane continued to act until 1917. Among his most notable later roles were the manipulative, but sympathetic Hannibal Rivers in *The Senator* (1890), the seemingly innocent W. Farragut Gurney in *For Money* (1892), and the likable horse trader David Harum (1900). Robson continued to appear in some of his old roles, as well as in such vehicles as *The Meddler* (1898) and *The Gadfly* (1899). In the latter he was praised for his “wooden countenance, his staccato utterance, and his long familiar squeak.” In an age when many a clergyman regularly railed at theatre people, Robson took pleasure in maintaining a scrapbook filled with published accounts of erring ministers. *Autobiography* (Crane): *Footprints and Echoes*, 1927.

How to cite this entry:

"Crane, William H[enry]" *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre*, 3rd edn., Gerald Bordman and Thomas S. Hischak, eds., Oxford University Press 2004. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. Harvard University Library. 21 April 2010







Bertha Galland in  
"Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall"

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